

WESTCHESTER family™

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FREE



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22 How Parents Can Give Kids An Academic Edge

Researchers agree academic success impacts children for the rest of their lives, which is why few things are as important to parents as education. You can make a real difference and give your child an academic edge by instilling good habits that have been correlated with academic success at an early age – learn how.

38 Pick-Your-Own Apples

Sure, apples are a delicious, nutritious snack. But in the fall months, apples aren't just something to eat. Pick-your-own apples are the perfect activity to get the entire family outside, moving and having fun!

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NEXT MONTH



Happy Hauntings!

As a holiday, Halloween is growing in popularity every year. Learn where all the fun will be this October with our comprehensive guide to all things slightly and super... scary!

Does My Child Need A Tutor? – The school year is in full swing and already you might be wondering if your child could benefit from some individualized help. Ask yourself these questions and make a proactive decision.

Plus ... Westchester Family's award-winning searchable **Calendar** for families and much more!

Look for it starting September 26!



ON THE COVER

COVER ARTWORK COURTESY OF STUDENTS FROM THE JOHN A. COLEMAN SCHOOL, WHITE PLAINS CAMPUS.

By Traci L. Suppa

Barton Orchards

Attractions, Entertainment,
Shopping and –
Oh, Yeah – Apples!

Apple picking has become our family's annual fall ritual. Luckily, there's an abundance of pick-your-own farms and orchards in the Hudson Valley where we can get a bushel of fresh, crispy apples and plump pumpkins. Barton Orchards in Poughquag (southern Dutchess County) is one of our favorite places. Not only can we find more than 20 apple varieties, there's also kid-friendly entertainment and delicious treats. It's a cross between a day in the country and an amusement park, and my kids can't get enough.

What You'll Find

The apple picking season at Barton Orchards begins in mid-August with the earliest varieties – Pristine and Ginger Gold – at their peak. You'll be able to pick your own through the end of October, when Granny Smith and Rome varieties are ready. My kids, 11-year-old Leo and 4-year-old Emilia, are not particular. I'm partial to Fuji apples, which aren't available until early October.

On weekends, a trip to this orchard is more about entertainment than agriculture. It's a full day's outing. Apple and pumpkin picking take a back seat to the activities spread over acres of land. Some activities such as the playground, petting zoo and walking trail, are open during the week. Others are set up just for weekends, including a haunted house, inflatables, hayrides and a "trackless" train. The five-acre corn maze is a wonder, but only suited for those without claustrophobia (not me). If that's not enough, there's also gem mining, a shooting gallery and live bands playing country, rock and bluegrass in the afternoons.

The Strategy

We've visited several times, and our strategy is to let the kids hit the playground first. Three large wood structures – a ship, castle and train – invite exploration. On our most recent trip, my daughter climbed to the castle roof, and threw down an imaginary train of hair, à la Rapunzel. We also paid a visit to the ponies, goats and donkeys. My daughter tried her best chicken call, which was met with silence. We approached a pen with two emus that lazily ignored us.

We then tried to interest the kids in actually picking some



apples. Emilia wanted first to find a "diamond" at the gem mining station, and Leo wanted an "udderly" delicious milkshake. There's much in the way of culinary temptation here, with several stands offering baked goods, hot caramel apple slices, apple pie, funnel cakes, candy apples, cotton candy, lemonade and more.

Once we were ready to head into the orchard, we lined

up for the hayride that drove us to the rows of ripe trees. We had a choice of filling a 10 lb. (\$14) or 20 lb. (\$20) bag, so each kid got the smaller size to fill on their own. We walked to the end of the row to find trees that still had low-bearing fruit for Emilia to reach. We explained how to check for blemishes, then demonstrated the “twist-and-pull” method to easily separate stem from branch.

There’s More

Beyond apples and pumpkins, you’ll still be able to get fresh vegetables like squash and zucchini at Barton Orchards in the fall. In addition to what’s still fresh, there’s a flavorful assortment of jarred peaches and pears, apple-sauce and pickles in the farm store. There’s a cozy, countrified feel inside the brand new store, where wood display cases are chock full of jams, jellies, baking mixes, dressings, honey, hot sauces and flavored oils and vinegars. You can pay for your loot with a credit card, and there’s an ATM.

We never leave without at least a dozen warm, freshly baked cider donuts, mainly because half usually don’t even make it to the car. We’re partial to the sugared variety, but they’re also made plain and with powdered sugar.

This fall, admission is free on weekdays, but the activities are limited. There will be a two-tiered pricing structure on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. Included in general admission is access to the walking trail, petting zoo, playground and live entertainment, as well as the hayrides. The premium admission fee gets you a wristband and access to all general admission activities, as well as the corn maze, inflatable zone, haunted house, trackless train, and the family theme park, which includes six attractions: pedal carts, boulder dash, pebble pusher, rope maze, tile maze and rock maze.

Additionally, you have the option to purchase tickets for some of the attractions individually, including the inflatable zone, corn maze and haunted house. ♦

Traci L. Suppa blogs about her family’s travels at www.GoBIGorGoHomeBlog.com.

WHEN YOU GO ...

BARTON ORCHARDS

63 Apple Tree Lane, Poughquag, N.Y.
845-227-2306
www.BartonOrchards.com

HOURS

Open seven days a week through Oct. 31.
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

ADMISSION

Admission is charged on weekends after Labor Day.
General Admission: \$3 per person, ages 6 and up.
Premium Admission (wristband): \$15 per person, ages 6 and up; \$10 per child ages 3-5.